1: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FT7 Yao FT7

completely exhausted or reduced to a mere trickle. The average annual rainfall over the last ten years is 29·75 in. The shore waters of Lake Pamolombe are well stocked with fish. Both districts are well wooded, with a large variety of timber trees. In the dry sandy soil where the population is unable to live for lack of water, the prevalent type is *tsanya*. A line of foothills from Zomba to Chikala are conserved as Forest Reserves.[1]

MAIN FEATURES OF ECONOMY[2]

The Yao are chiefly agriculturists, and in the old days were also hunters. As they live largely in tsetse-infested areas, they do not keep cattle, except for a few herds near Fort Johnston and Zomba, in Nyasaland, and on the east of Lake Nyasa,[3] in the mountains of the Ruvuma valley around Mataka's.[4]

Abdullah describes a time when the Yao were economically self-sufficient, making their own bark-cloth, weaving, burning herbs for salt, and working iron for the tools they needed. Nevertheless, the tradition of coastward journeys for trading with the Arabs was well developed before the Europeans came to the country. They used to trade cattle and salt from the Manganja and Lomwe for tobacco and hoes, and in exchange for slaves they got from the Arabs gunpowder, guns, swords, beads, coloured cloths, earthenware, and foodstuffs.[5] Slaving expeditions were among the most important activities of the chiefs.[6] The old tradition of the absence of the men from the village owing to these expeditions, is continued in modern times by soldiers and labour migrants to Southern Rhodesia and the Union. These men send back remittances to the area, but the main population is supported by agriculture. Cash is needed for purchasing salt and cloth, for paying certain dues and fines formerly paid in kind—adultery compensation, diviner's and initiation fees—as well as for tax and rent. Consequently, while certain crops, such as tobacco and ground-nuts, are grown for cash, any food crop is liable to be sold in one form or another in local markets or by the roadside.

The food crops are maize, sorghum, finger millet, sweet potatoes, ground-nuts, legumes. Fish is an important article of diet. Eggs are believed to cause sterility and are only eaten by those outside the child-propagating age; milk is disliked and never consumed.[7] *Termite alates* (flying ants) are a much relished food when they come out on nuptial flights. Rice is considered a superior food, and is eaten when possible on ritual occasions.[8]

Tobacco is the main cash crop, with individual production under the supervision of the Agricultural Department. The average cash earned per grower in 1943–4 was £5. 3*s*. This is overwhelmingly an external trade. Ground-nuts, which are sold at government-controlled markets to licensed buyers, bring in only a few shillings a year to the average seller. Women obtain cash by selling beer. At the lake shore the fishing industry is very important. Natives owning big nets are said to make between £20

[1] Murray, 1932, pp. 147–61.

[2] Unless otherwise stated, the information is from J. C. Mitchell, and relates to the Yao of south Nyasaland.

[3] Livingstone, 1874, pp. 72 and 80.

[4] See Livingstone, 1874, p. 68; Young, E., 1877, p. 130; Thompson, 1882, p. 78; Scharer, 1893, p. 402; Maugham, 2, 1909, pp. 86–7; Lewis, 1934, pp. 33–7.

[5] Bentzon, 4, 1902, p. 34.

[6] Young, E., 1877, p. 102.

[7] Abdullah, 1919, pp. 10–11, 28–30.

[8] Barker, 1934, p. 14.

1: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FT7 Yao FT7

and £30 per annum. It is profitable to carry fresh fish inland by bicycle even as far as Blantyre,[1] as the shore price to the retailer is 4*s.* a load, which later may fetch from 16*s.* to 24*s.*[2] Yao on the south-west lake shore grow an excellent quality rice.[3] Rice is also grown near Lake Chilwa, but is mainly sold in the market organized near the lake shore by the Agricultural Department.

Division of Labour

The man builds the house, hunts, fishes, makes the nets, baskets, grain-store, game-traps, and, in the old days, the bark-cloth. He cultivates the tobacco. He cuts down the trees and may help with the hoeing and harvesting. The woman hoes, muds the floor of the hut, sweeps, cooks, brings firewood, draws water, brews beer, makes the pots and pipes.[4]

Land Usage

There are two types of garden in the Yao areas south of Lake Nyasa: one the ordinary garden in which the staples grow, and second, gardens along the stream beds. These latter are especially valuable for providing out-of-season crops. In addition most householders have a few small plots for tobacco and ground-nuts.

The main garden is cultivated by the slash-and-burn method, common in Central Africa. The Yao, unlike the Bemba, garden occupies the whole area cleared. Burning is done just before the rainy season (October–November). The ash and soil are hoed into elongated mounds and grain is planted along the ridges. Gardens may be cultivated for more than five years. In the second and subsequent years of cultivation the stalks and weeds are piled up and burnt. There are signs of soil impoverishment. The gardens are cleared in August, and heaped to dry for burning. After the burning the seeds are planted in late November. By February and March green maize is available to supplement the diet, and by the end of April the crops are ready to be harvested. The maize is stored in wicker containers, while sorghum is stored in the huts on a stand. Cassava is planted in large mounds made by turning the turfs over, so that the roots are outside the mound and the vegetable matter inside. Legumes are planted in smaller gardens, or interplanted with the main crop. Ground-nuts are stored, after being shelled, in mud-plastered wicker containers, designed to be rat-proof. Tobacco is planted at the sides of the streams for hand-watering in the seedling stage, and then transplanted about January. The leaves are ready to be plucked about April and soon afterwards they are marketed. Sweet potatoes are planted in the rainy season, and are ready for eating in May. The stream gardens yield out-of-season crops—maize, beans, pumpkins, and also sugar-cane, which is used in the initiation ceremonies.

Craftsmanship

The Yao have few skills. All cultivation is by hoe; axes and knives are their only other technological equipment. The men make mats from reeds and palm leaf, and the women make pottery. The huts are strongly built from poles laced with bamboo and plastered with mud. The roof is thatched with grass. Under Arab influence the

[1] *Census of Native Population*, 1931, p. 26.
[2] Codrington, 1898, p. 317.
[3] Stannus, 4, 1922, p. 236; Macdonald, 1882, vol. i, p. 137.
[4] Aplin, 1931, p. 19.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

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(*a*) Patchwork cultivation in Chiwalo area. Note how the natural vegetation has been cleared for staple gardens. Patches of ash from burnt garden refuse can be seen to the left. There are also two small villages in the foreground and a large village distinguishable by the dark patch of mango trees at the foot of the hill in the top left-hand corner.
(*October 1948*)

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(*b*) A small village in typical surroundings in Chiwalo area.
(*August 1948*)

PLATE II [facing p. 12]

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

APPENDIX A

ECONOMIC DATA

AMOUNT AND VALUE OF TOBACCO BOUGHT IN JALASI–KAWINGA AREAS 1942–49

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Year	Growers	Amount in lbs.	Cash Value £	Av. Price per Grower (pence per lb.)	Lbs. per Grower	Cash per Grower £ s. d.
1941/2 .	1055	393,964	6695	4·08	373	6 6 9
1942/3 .	2106	465,477	7044	3·02	221	4 0 0
1943/4 .	1792	464,929	8025	4·15	259	4 8 5
1944/5 .	1246	269,212	3067	2·84	216	2 9 3
1945/6 .	1074	127,237	6471	12·41	119	6 0 6
1946/7 .	918	116,590	4020	8·28	127	4 7 5
1947/8 .	1570	132,832	5035	9·18	85	3 4 3
1948/9 .	1315	171,865	5206	9·60	130	4 0 0

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE BOUGHT IN KAWINGA–JALASI AREAS AT NAMWERA, LIWONDE, MLOMBA, NTAJA, NYAMBI, AND MASUKU MARKETS. AVERAGE FOR THE YEARS 1945–47 INCLUSIVE

241
433
435

(in 1000 lb.)

Year	Maize	Groundnuts	Rice	Beans
1945	23·6	1395	94·0	31·0
1946	101·4	1268	60·4	34·6
1947	nil	1465	122·8	2·8
Total	125·0	4128	277·2	68·4
Average . . .	41·6	1376·1	92·4	22·8

LIVESTOCK CENSUS IN KAWINGA–JALASI AREAS, 1947
(Jalasi, Kawinga, Liwonde and Nyambi, and Malemia areas)

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Goats	Sheep	Pigs	Cattle
4319	2498	4	225*

* Most of these are owned by White settlers.

3: Stanman D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

832 *Mpasi* is a love potion. Men are often anxious that women should ask them for love (*ku-pasa*). A man seeing a woman whom he fancies, takes up some of the dust where she has trodden and mixing this with medicine puts it in his hair. If he meet her again, though he takes no notice of her, she will come to him.

789 241 826 When crops are harvested, a layer of the cereal is laid at the bottom of the corn-store, and *unda*, which consists of medicines contained in the skull of or made from the body of a still-born infant, is then put in and the store filled. In this way, he who has only a small garden may be sure that his grain will last a long time. Similar medicine is put in gardens with the first rains to insure heavy crops. A man on the approach of the planting season should never give away seed to anyone until his own seed is put in or it may bring bad luck to his crop. This is evidently a superstition arising from the fact that if he gives seed away, he may not have enough left to raise a crop sufficient to support his family. Some people are considered "lucky at planting pumpkins, other people when they plant, reap only watery pumpkins." A man, therefore, will often ask one of the lucky people to plant his pumpkins for him. My hospital boy always got the cook to plant his pumpkins.

789 824 A man wishing to become a person of importance, with a village of his own, takes a medicine made from a certain tree and then builds his hut in a new place, hoping people will flock to him. The tree is known as *chikambili*. Another medicine, taken in the belief that people will flock to a man in consequence, is made from the bush called *mtola*. Cf. *litula* planted at the threshold to attract visitors.

789 791 **Conjuring.** There are other performances akin to magic in the eyes of the natives, which I have never had the opportunity of witnessing but which would appear to be of the nature of juggling or possibly hypnotism; some resemble the tricks of jugglers; others are more like some of the performances in India. I naturally supposed that they had been learned from men at the coast (Zanzibar), but I am assured that they belong to the Yao themselves.

Kambenje, a Yao of Chiradzulu, well-known at dances and *Unyago*, after some preliminary dancing, stands still and is covered by a cloth; when the cloth is again removed, he is discovered with a number of squealing puppies held in his loin cloth, which he then hands round. He begins to dance again and the persons to whom the puppies have been given watch him and then find they are holding excrement, not puppies. Or mud-fish are handed round and the people find they are holding women's diapers.

Another trick often performed by Kambenje was the burial of a man in the ground, covered up completely with earth; at the sounding of the drums the buried man comes running in from the back of the watching crowd.

Kasonga, a Yao of Malemya's, priest, and medicine man, after an *Unyago* ceremony used to put on his red blanket and walk over the hot embers of an enormous fire in the village open space. He admitted that he smeared himself with medicine and an eyewitness told me that when he put his feet on the hot logs, it caused a sizzling sound.

3: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

knees and elbows, at intervals swaying their bodies from side to side and clapping their hands. Kasonga then ordered all to go and bathe, men and women separately. As they returned from the stream, rain began to fall.

Intercession on behalf of the sick may be made, especially by anyone who is likely to be accused of causing the illness by witchcraft.[1] The man standing with arms outstretched, downwards and a little in front of his body, the hands supine, takes some water in his mouth and discharges it in a stream on the ground, (probably as a sign of purification of his tongue), and then invoking "all the spirits above," asks that they will intercede to restore health to the sick man and bear witness to his own innocence of any wish to do the sick man injury. *Ku-pepa* is the word meaning to offer sacrifice and prayer.

Harvesting and hunting are occasions when sacrifices may be offered. It was formerly the custom for the chief to determine the day on which harvesting of millet should begin. On the day appointed, a big drum was beaten in the village and word passed round; then everyone would go down to his garden, gather a head of millet, and bring it back to the village where it was all handed over to the chief's headwife. After drying and threshing, a little of the grain was laid at the grave of an old chief by one of the reigning chief's advisers, the remainder being again distributed to all the people gathered together in the village meeting-place, who ate it raw. After this ceremony, harvesting began.

In passing through a millet garden, if a child asks his mother to give him some to eat, she plucks a bunch or two and reverently laying one at the foot of a *msoro* tree for the spirits or at the base of some other tree, if she cannot see a *msoro*, she gives the rest to the child.

When a hunting expedition makes its first killing, part of the flesh of the animal is laid at the base of a tree as a thank offering to the spirits and in anticipation of further favors to be conferred. All such offerings are supposed by the natives to be partaken of by the spirits, though they are well aware that they do not actually diminish in quantity. There is an interesting point in this connection: any man who has acted as *mbilo* (undertaker) to some well-known man may appropriate these offerings. In the case of the hunting offering, he will run round the tree, saying, "I am a hyaena, the spirits will not mind me," and will then take part of the flesh-offering and eat it.

In the same way, a *mbilo* may drink from a grave beer-pot after three days, when the spirits are supposed to have taken what they want.

With the exception of the *msoro* tree above mentioned (*ndima*, Chin.), and possibly another called *nailo-ngoma* (Chin.), which is never used as firewood and which is supposed to be used by *mazuzi*, I do not think there are any sacred trees properly so-called. Miss Werner supposes that many of the big trees (often a species of *Ficus*) in villages are sacred.[2] The truth is, I believe, simply that a village is made naturally round a big tree which conveniently offers its shade for the village meeting place. The spirits of deceased chiefs may

[1] Vide supra, p. 297. [2] The natives of British Central Africa, op. cit., p. 62.

3: Sinaamua D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

never leave any food outside at night, not even the chaff from the grain she has been pounding, lest these most miserable of beings be attracted by it.

Chitowe is a word common to several tribes and among them appears to have various shades of meaning. Among the Wayao, the *itowe* are "the little people" of the leprechaun order. They rob the gardens and cause rot among the pumpkins; their little footprints can be seen where they have passed hither and thither; fruits and vegetables that they touch will become bitter. To prevent these disasters, the Yao, at the time when their crops are ripening, place different kinds of vegetables at cross-roads, hoping thereby to satisfy the *itowe* and prevent them coming into the gardens. As far as I am aware, the *itowe* have nothing to do with famine and are in no way connected with *Mtenge*, to be mentioned below, as Macdonald believed.[1] The *chitowe* is variously said to be "like a man but rather like an animal." He has two legs but goes on all fours.

The Yao describe another legendary race of "little people" who used to live in this country and who may still be met with, — "who knows?" They were of a very small stature, grew long beards, were very touchy, quarrelsome, and fierce, and carried spears. When anybody met one, he was immediately asked: "*Mumbonele kuapi?*", "From how far did you see me?" and it was always well to pretend to have seen the little man coming a long way off and make him believe he was considered quite a big person; if you said "Hullo, I have only just spotted you!", he would immediately spear you. They are commonly supposed to dwell on the tops of high mountains and are iron workers. They are called the *Mumbonele kuapi*.

There is no relation as far as I know between these two classes of "little people," but I think these stories go to uphold the theory recently reiterated by Hastings Guilford in his Hunterian Lecture (1914) that folk-lore fables of hobgoblins, etc., have a basis in fact. He believes that dwarf races at one time were to be found, possibly over a very wide area of the globe. In this country, I think it may be that one sees the transition from historical facts to true fairy stories.

The Anyanja have the same legend about these "little people," the *mwandi enenakuti* ("whom-did-you-see-me"); it is indeed not only wide-spread throughout this country, (the Ahenga and Ankonde in North Nyasa district speak of the *mwandionenaku* who ask the same question), but there is a very similar legend among the Akikuyu in British East Africa.[2]

The *chitowe* is doubtless the *chirwi* of the Anyanja, mentioned in Scott's dictionary,[3] as Miss Werner[4] has supposed, for one finds that among the Anyanja at the southern end of the Protectorate, the *chitowe* is described as having only one side to his body so that he is invisible when viewed from the off side, thus resembling the *chirwi* who has one half of his body made of wax.

[1] Op. cit., vol. I, p. 71. [2] M. W. H. Beech, 'Pre-Bantu elements of East Africa,' (Man, London, 1915, p. 40-41).
[3] Op. cit., p. 97. [4] British Central Africa, op. cit., p. 53.

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3

1st voice. *Atindili mbatata nganga yelele eja wakolabwe,*
potatoes guinea fowl eeh! thank you you,
2d voice. *Atindili mbatata akundanda atiyana'we muunja.*
potatoes they are calling me Atiyana there is going away home;
Chorus. *Kwanda, akakukile!*
Remove the hoe from its handle!

The name of any person may be introduced into these songs, sometimes the name of a member of the village or of some person well known in the district. To introduce a name thus is *ku-lumba*. *Eja!* is an exclamation of thanks; when receiving anything, both hands are held out, and the words *eja, eja, eja!* or *nanga, nanga!* are uttered.

4

1st voice. *Makolowele 'galile sombe apalapala nganapanda nguamba.*
The millet have eaten locusts yon place did not plant not.
2d voice. *'Galile sombe apalapala nganapanda mpunga, atati, nguamba!*
Have eaten locust yon place did not plant rice, father, not!
3d voice. *Apalapala nganapanda mpunga, atati, nguamba!*
1st voice. *Apalapala nganapanda mpunga, atati, nguamba!*
Chorus. *Makolowele, galile sombe!*

Makolowele: after the first crop of millet has been taken in, the stalks are cut off near the ground and the roots allowed to remain in the soil. Next season, they again sprout and yield a second crop. This second year growth is *makolowele*. [241]

5

1st voice. *Masimba m'chinguamba chilo chilo chilao chilo chila!*
Lions in the palm-trees at night, etc.
2d voice. *Masimba m'chinguamba, kwimba likwata Atiyana! Tinjiwa chilo chilo etc.*
Lions in the palm-trees to sing *likwata Atiyana!* I shall die tonight, tonight, etc.
Chorus. *Masimba m'chinguamba!*

Likwata is the name of a dance, *Atiyana* is a woman's name. Cf. "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die."

6

1st voice. *Ndandee, ndanda, ndandee!* Repeat.
Teasing, teasing, teasing!
2d voice. *Nakolaga chilanda tanda, nandanda'ne, nguanda!*
If you have teasing teasing, me tease me, I am going away!
Chorus. *Ndandee!*

4: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1909) 1910 FT7 Yao FT7
Marovi FR4

Gaga, the residue after pounding maize, is eaten by the women. No oils are used in cooking, but of fat and suet any native is very fond. Meat may be dried and smoked if in large quantity: flesh, fish and fowl is commonly roasted on spits; small pieces of chicken may be made into a kind of stew with beans and eaten as the relish. When on a journey the fire is commonly made against a tree. The cooking vessels are cleaned before use, not after. The fried fish eaten is often partly decomposed, and meat which is very high, even with maggots, is cooked and eaten, maggots and all.

Taboo.—Bushbuck is not eaten by many natives, as they say it feeds near graveyards. Fowls are not eaten by some, as this diet causes them to vomit; a snake-catcher never eats vegetables, and at the same time puts medicine on his hands. Many abstain from the flesh of certain animals as certain skin diseases are said to be caused thereby; all such diseases bear the name *wakwacaga*.

A man who loses a relation by drowning takes an oath that he will never again eat fish, and never drink water from such lake, river, etc. Here the idea is of course simply to avoid eating part of the relation.

A Nyasa and Machinga will not eat the flesh of the hippopotamus, because on the body they say there are the marks of a string round the loins and of a mat on his back, adding that long ago he was a man. Animals of prey would never under any circumstances be eaten. Milk used never to be drunk by an adult, as it was said to cause a man to become as a child. A man would not dare to drink woman's milk as it was said he would surely die of dysentery.

Tobacco, etc.—The smoking of tobacco was a custom introduced from the coast. Chewing was general among Machinga and Yao men and women, while the Angoni and Mañanja snuffed. With the tobacco a little lime, made by burning shells, was taken in the mouth. Giddiness and sleepy sensations were experienced after chewing. The Nyasa and Awisa smoke a hubble-bubble, the water vessel being a large sausage-shaped gourd with a reed stem supporting a large bowl of *mbabwa* wood, sometimes very nicely carved (Plate XXVII, Figs. 5 and 7). The Amyanja smokes a pipe with the bowl made of clay and the stem of bamboo (Plate XXVII, Fig. 6); these are made by the women. Tobacco is grown in nearly every village, a large-leaved rather coarse variety; it is sun-dried and rolled up into hollow rings 6 inches in diameter and 3 inches broad. For snuff (*Podia womunas*) the sun-dried tobacco is further dried over a fire on a pan, when cold it is ground on a stone with a smaller stone by the women, and with it is mixed some ashes of the *ngoza* fig-tree.

At Blantyre I obtained a water-pipe made of bamboo stem; this was the water reservoir; a stem of reed supports a little clay bowl. The mouth is placed over the upper end of the bamboo. Bhang (*cannabis indica*) is smoked in a pipe of this kind.

AGRICULTURE.

The people live by cultivating the soil. Both sexes help in hoeing and planting, the collecting of the crops being mostly done by women. The hoe is the

4: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1909)1910 FT7 Yao FT7
Marayi FR4
Ngoni FR5

M Y 241 only implement used. Sowing is done after the first rains, about November; the harvest takes place in May to July. Gardens are at varying distances from the villages, depending partly on the soil becoming exhausted after years of cultivation. Boundaries are marked by leaving M Y [423] a line of uncultivated ground, sowing a line of a different crop, N [422] tying knots in the young crops at intervals, ditches, etc. In starting a new garden, woodland is often taken; the trees

FIG. 8.

are cut down, leaving stumps 3 feet high; the undergrowth is cleared away and burnt, the ashes distributed over the land, which is then hoed, really very superficially; the earth is then made up into little heaps with a central hole in each, after the first rains four or five grains of the cereal (maize, millet) are dropped in each and covered with earth; as the young shoots grow the hole is more and more filled in.

With the cereal is planted the seed of peas, beans, pumpkins, the former on coming up then grow up the maize stalks. The seed is last year's product and not specially selected.

M Y [343] [417] Depredations among crops made by elephant, hippopotamus, large antelope (eland and kudu), pigs and baboons, vary in extent in different districts. Little grass huts are built, raised above the ground like a pile-dwelling, in which watchers are stationed. Fences, sometimes extending for miles, are built. The gardens of the chief are hoed by his slaves or the people of the village. Maize is collected M Y [251] in the cob, and after the outer coverings have been removed is stored; so is the *nkolwe*, millet in the head; beans and peas are stored in baskets. Medicine is put on the ground to ensure a good crop, and a piece of stick is sometimes hung up for good luck.

CATTLE, ETC.

N 231 [422] The keeping of cattle is practically restricted to certain tribes living in districts free from tsetse-fly (Angoni, Wankonde); among these people wealth is reckoned by cattle. The milk is little used; the flesh is eaten only when an animal dies. Marks of ownership are made by cutting the ears (Fig. 8). Cattle are kept in open kraals by Angoni, in a compartment of their houses by Wankonde; they are tended by the small boys as a rule. Goats and sheep are kept all over the country. Castration of cattle is a recognised practice (*kufula*).

N 281 Angoni make their shields from cattle skins; their spear handles are covered with goat hair (beard); hair anklets and armlets in dancing costume are made from goat hair. Skins are used as dress to a small extent.

HUNTING.

M 224 A man intimates to the community around that he is making a hunt by clothing a boy of about ten years in leaves, who precedes him and the men from his own village through adjacent villages; at each village the lad has to lie down and